recording medium;

a [light rays] flux separating element [for separating the reflection] configured to separate light rays reflected on said optical recording medium from [the] an optical axis of [the] incident light rays, said flux separating element being formed of a birefringent material and disposed in a divergent optical path between said light source and said quarter-wave plate; and

B1

a light-receiving element positioned adjacent said light source and at a front side thereof for detecting [the] a signal from said reflection light rays[,

wherein an optical element made of birefringent material is employed as said light rays flux separating element, and

wherein said light rays flux separating element is disposed in the divergent optical path just after said light source].--

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--3. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 1,

B2

wherein [the] an incident plain surface of said [light rays] flux separating element is not perpendicular to the optical axis.--

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--5. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein a plain plate made of birefringent material is employed as said [light rays] flux separating element.--

--6. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein said [light rays] flux separating element is employed as a window member of said semiconductor laser [for outgoing light rays emitted therefrom].--

--7. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein two pieces of

B3

prism consisting of same sort of uniaxial crystal respectively having optical axes intersecting perpendicularly to each other are employed[, and assuming that the] as said flux separating element, such that when a refractive index for [the] ordinary light rays of the prism [is] η_o[,

88

and the] is larger than a refractive index for [the] extraordinary light rays [is] η_e, [when η_o is larger than η_e ($\eta_e < \eta_o$), the] an incident angle of the ordinary light rays transmitted through the first prism to the second prism is δ, and [the] a counterclockwise angle from the optical axis of the ordinary light rays is [assumed to be] in a plus (+) direction[,] when the value of δ becomes larger than zero [($\delta > 0$)], and [on the contrary,] such that when η_o is larger than η_e [($\eta_o > \eta_e$)], [the] an incident angle of the extraordinary light rays transmitted through the first prism to the second prism is δ, and [the] a counterclockwise angle from the optical axis of the extraordinary light rays is [assumed to be] in a plus (+) direction[,] when the value of δ becomes smaller than zero ($\delta < 0$).--

B3

~~10~~ 11. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus, [wherein said optical pickup apparatus focuses the light rays flux emitted from a semiconductor laser through an objective lens onto an optical information recording medium in order to form a small spot on said recording medium performs the operations of recording, reproducing, and/or erasing the optical information, said semiconductor laser and said light-receiving element are formed on a single stem, and the light rays flux is guided to said objective lens through a uniaxial crystal plate partly having a discontinuous surface] comprising:

B4

a semiconductor laser and at least one light-receiving element formed in a single stem and positioned such that said semiconductor laser emits light ray flux along a first optical path through an objective lens onto an optical recording medium in a form of a small spot to facilitate operation of recording, reproducing and/or erasing of optical information, and such that said at least one light-receiving element receives light from a second optical path that is at least partially different from said first optical path; and

a uniaxial crystal plate having a discontinuous surface and being disposed in said first

89

optical path between said semiconductor laser and the objective lens;

wherein said light ray flux emitted from said semiconductor laser is transmitted along said first optical path through said uniaxial crystal plate to said objective lens for focusing on the optical recording medium; and

wherein light ray flux reflected from the optical recording medium is transmitted through said uniaxial crystal plate and along said second optical path to said at least one light-receiving element.--

13
--~~11~~. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim ~~10~~ 11, wherein said at least one light-receiving element formed on said stem consists of two pieces of two-divisional light-receiving elements respectively having dividing directions different from each other, and [the] a height of one of said light-receiving elements is the same as [that] a height of said semiconductor laser, while [the] a height of another one of said light-receiving elements is different from [that] said height of said semiconductor laser.--

--12. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in [either one of claims 8 and 10] claim ~~10~~ 11,

wherein a uniaxial crystal plate is hermetically sealed unitarily in a package containing said semiconductor laser and said at least one light-receiving element therein.

~~8-15~~. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in [either one of claims 13 and 14] claim 1, wherein [all of the optical parts constructing the optical pickup portion from said semiconductor laser to] said light source, said light-receiving element, said flux separating element, said quarter-wave plate and said objective lens are mounted unitarily to form a unitary optical pickup portion.--

10
--~~16~~. (Amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in [either one of claims 13, 14 and 15] claim 1, wherein [the optical parts constructing the optical pickup portion from said